

Snap parliamentary elections were held in July, triggered by the resignation of Prime Minister Alenka Bratušek, who lost the support of her center-left Positive Slovenia (PS) party amid strict austerity measures and soaring public debt. The new center-left Modern Centre Party (SMC), led by novice politician and law professor Miro Cerer, won a majority with 34.8 percent of the vote on a campaign based on boosting economic growth and decreasing the national deficit. The parliament approved an SMC-led coalition in September. The Slovenian economy improved toward the end of the year, avoiding the possibility of a bailout with growth of 1.4 percent in its gross domestic product (GDP) for the year.

Ongoing legal proceedings against journalist Anuška Delić, who faces allegations of disclosing classified information, drew criticism from international and domestic media rights groups in 2014. In June, officials marked the beginning of a compensation plan for the “erased,” a group of individuals residing in Slovenia who lost their legal status after being removed from the state registry following the breakup of Yugoslavia.

A two-decade border dispute with Croatia—which concerns the delineation of the countries’ maritime border in the Bay of Piran and parts of their common territorial border—remains a key foreign policy issue in Slovenia. Following parliamentary approval in both states and a successful 2010 referendum in Slovenia, an international arbitration panel held its first meeting in 2012. It entered its final stage of arbitration in June 2014 with the submission of final statements from both countries. The third-party ruling, which will demarcate the disputed border, was still pending at year’s end.

Political Rights and Civil Liberties:

### **Political Rights: 38 / 40 [Key]**

#### **A. Electoral Process: 12 / 12**

Slovenia has a bicameral legislature. Members of the 90-seat National Assembly (Državni Zbor) are elected to four-year terms and have the power to choose the prime minister. Members of the 40-seat National Council (Državni Svet), a largely advisory body representing professional groups and local interests, are elected to five-year terms. The president is directly elected for up to two five-year terms.

In early elections held in July 2014, the SMC won with 34.8 percent of the vote, taking 36 seats. The center-right Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), led by former prime minister Janez Janša, took 21 seats, making it the leading opposition party. The Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (DeSUS) took 10 seats, the United Left Alliance (ZL) and the Social Democrats (SD) each captured 6, New Slovenia-Christian Democrats (NSi) took 5, and the Alliance of Alenka Bratušek (ZaAB) took 4. Two seats were allocated to representatives of ethnic minorities. In September, the parliament approved a three-party coalition comprised of the governing SMC, DeSUS, and SD.

In a presidential runoff in 2012, former prime minister and head of the SD party Borut Pahor defeated incumbent Danilo Türk with 67.4 percent of the vote to Türk’s 32.6 percent.

#### **B. Political Pluralism and Participation: 15 / 16**

A number of political parties compete for power in Slovenia. In the most recent parliamentary elections, 17 parties took part, including several formed in 2014. In addition to the SMC, the newcomers included the ZL, ZaAB, Verjamem, and the Slovenian Pirate Party (PSS). Meanwhile, the former majority PS—the former party of departing prime minister Bratušek—lost all 28 of its seats in the legislature.

In the National Assembly, one seat each is reserved for Slovenia's Hungarian and Italian minorities. For municipal councils, Roma are automatically given seats on 20 municipal councils. In 2010, Ghanian-born Peter Bossman was elected mayor of Piran, making him the first black mayor of an Eastern European city.

### **C. Functioning of Government: 11 / 12**

Corruption is less prevalent in Slovenia than in many of its neighbors, and it usually takes the form of conflicts of interest involving contracts between government officials and private businesses. However, a number of high-profile corruption cases have emerged in recent years. Former prime minister Janša began serving a two-year sentence in June 2014 but was granted a temporary injunction in December. In January 2013, Slovenia's anticorruption commission had accused Janša and fellow PS member Zoran Janković of failing to declare their assets; and in June 2013, Janša was found guilty of accepting bribes in a 2006 arms deal with the Finnish company Patria during his first term as prime minister. Janša has maintained that he is innocent, saying the charges were politically motivated.

Only 5,000 of Slovenia's 80,000 public servants are subject to financial disclosure laws, according to the U.S. State Department. Slovenia was ranked 39 out of 175 countries and territories surveyed in Transparency International's 2014 Corruption Perceptions Index.

### **Civil Liberties: 53 / 60**

### **D. Freedom of Expression and Belief: 14 / 16**

Freedoms of speech and the press are constitutionally guaranteed, though defamation remains a criminal offense, journalists can be legally compelled to reveal their sources, and hate speech is outlawed. The government maintains stakes in a number of media outlets and has been known to interfere in the operations of the public broadcaster, Radio Televizija Slovenija. Internet access is unrestricted.

The case of Anuška Delić, a journalist for the daily *Delo*, continued in 2014. She faces the charge of disseminating information classified by the Slovenian intelligence services, for which she was indicted in 2013. If found guilty, she can serve up to three years in prison. The charges are connected to articles Delić authored in 2011 alleging links between the SDS and a neo-Nazi organization. In 2014, a court denied the prosecution's request to monitor Delić's phone. In another case, police searched the home of Politikis web writer Dejan in January 2014, shortly after the writer covered Janša's corruption scandal online.

The constitution guarantees freedom of religion and contains provisions that prohibit incitement to religious intolerance or discrimination. Approximately 58 percent of Slovenians identify themselves as Roman Catholics. In 2010, the Constitutional Court annulled certain provisions of the 2007 Religious Freedoms Law, including requirements for legal registration of religious communities and the payment of social security contributions to priests working in prisons and hospitals. Though societal discrimination against

the small Muslim community has been problematic in the past, there were no major cases of interfaith conflict in 2014. After a decades-long struggle to build a mosque in Ljubljana, a groundbreaking ceremony was held in 2013; the project was ongoing in 2014.

There were no reports of government restrictions on academic freedom during the year.

## **E. Associational and Organizational Rights: 12 / 12**

The government respects freedoms of assembly and association. Numerous nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) operate freely and play a role in policymaking.

Workers may establish and join trade unions, strike, and bargain collectively. The Association of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia has some 300,000 members and controls the four trade union seats in the National Council.

## **F. Rule of Law: 14 / 16**

The constitution provides for an independent judiciary, and the government respects it in practice. Introduced in 2005, the Lukenda Project has helped the judiciary steadily reduce case backlogs and was partially extended through 2014.

Prison conditions meet international standards, though overcrowding has been reported.

In June 2014, the country began a national compensation scheme of approximately €19.7 million (\$22.4 million) for the so-called “erased.” This group is comprised of more 25,000 non-Slovene citizens, mostly from other constituent republics within the former Yugoslavia, who remained in Slovenia after independence and were removed from official records after they failed to apply for citizenship or permanent residency during a brief window in 1992. In 2012, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that the “erasures” were human rights violations and ordered Slovenia to pay compensation to the victims. As of May 2014, the Interior Ministry reported that 6,561 applications for compensation had been filed, and 4,840 cases had been approved for payment. In 2009, Pahor’s government began enforcing a 2003 Constitutional Court ruling intended to provide retroactive permanent residency status to those who had been erased. Legislation adopted in 2010 reinstated the legal status of those erased in 1992, but implementation has been problematic.

Roma face widespread poverty and societal marginalization. While there are legal protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation, discrimination against LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) people is common.

## **G. Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights: 13 / 16**

There are no restrictions on internal or foreign travel, and citizens enjoy the right to choose their residence, employment, and institution of higher education.

According to official information, approximately 12 percent of the country is unemployed. Much of the

economy remains state controlled.

Women hold the same legal rights as men, but they are underrepresented in political life and face discrimination in the workplace. Following the 2014 parliamentary elections, there were 32 women in the National Assembly and 3 in the National Council. Domestic violence remains a concern. Prostitution has been decriminalized in Slovenia. Slovenia is a transit point and destination for women and girls trafficked for the purpose of prostitution.

### **Scoring Key: X / Y (Z)**

**X = Score Received**

**Y = Best Possible Score**

**Z = Change from Previous Year**

**[Full Methodology](#)**